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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

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BURGH AND GRAMMAR SCHOOLS (1100-1872)

The history of the development of the Scottish school system is very interesting. Early in the twelfth century we have documentary evidence of the existence of schools at Abernethy, Perth, and Stirling; while in the two following centuries similar records are quite frequent. It is known, for example, that Robert the Bruce early in the fourteenth century (1329) gave twenty shillings to "David of Montrose in aid of the schools." Again, in the reign of James IV the Scottish Parliament (1494) enacted "that all barrones and freeholders that ar of substance put their eldest sonnes and aires to the Schools fra thay be auct or nine yeires of age, and till remaine at the Grammar-Schules quhill thay be competentlie foundit and have perfite Latine." This oft-quoted statute is taken as evidence that "toward the end of the fifteenth century schools were planted in every considerable town in Scotland." But there is nothing to show that they were important. On the contrary, it was "to prevent the inconvenience of sending abroad the Scottish youth who desired a liberal education and could not obtain it in the schools" that the University of St. Andrews was founded in 1411, to the great joy of the nation; and its vitality as a center of education—for with it were connected during the next two centuries almost all the most eminent Scotsmen either as teachers or as pupils—is abundant proof of the important function it then sustained in the sphere of higher education.

The early schools, invariably associated with the church, were under its control and management. We read that the Grammar School of Glasgow which existed at the beginning of

the fourteenth century was under the superintendence of the chancellor of the cathedral of that city. On the other hand, the burgh authorities, whose control at a later date was so characteristic a feature, had little, if anything to do with the schools at this time. Consequently, at first, the master was a churchman, but long before the Reformation laymen began to occupy this position.

As may be supposed, the chief, if not the only, subject of instruction was Latin. Greek was not introduced into Scotland until 1534, when John Erskine of Dun on returning from his travels brought with him a Frenchman skilled in this language, whom he settled in Montrose. Here Andrew Melville, instead of going direct to the university, as was usual for young men of his age and progress, first put himself under the care of this learned Frenchman, and, passing thence to St. Andrews in 1559, he made use of the original text of Aristotle's writings in his studies—"a circumstance which excited astonishment in the university," as the professors had no knowledge of Greek. With regard to the instruction given in the schools we have one or two interesting accounts preserved. From the historical records of the Grammar School at Aberdeen we find that in 1553 the boys were supposed to have a fair acquaintance with the art of counting, and that they were permitted to speak only in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Gaelic, the vernacular being strictly prohibited; again, from the diary of James Melville, who attended schools at Logie and Montrose, we extract the following:

We learned thar the Rudiments of the Latin Grammair, with the Vocables in Latin and frenche, also dyvers speitches in frenche, with the reiding and right pronounciation of that tounge. We proceidit fordar to the Etymologie of Lilius and his Syntax, as also a lytle of the Syntax of Linacer, therewith was joyned Hunters Nomenclatura, the minora Colloquia of Erasmus and sum of the Eclogs of Virgill and Epist of Horace, also Cicero his epistles ad Terentiam. . . . Sa I was put to the Scholl of Montrose. The maister of the scholl a learned honest kynd man, was verie skilfull and diligent. The first yeir he causit us go throu the Rudiments againe, thereafter enter and pass throu the first part of Grammiar of Sebastian therewith we hard phormione Terentii, and war exercised in composition. Efter that entered to

the second part and hard thereat the Georgics of Virgill and dyvers uther things.

After the Reformation the grammar schools, or "burgh schools" as they were variously called, began to make great progress. In the *First Book of Discipline* (1561) Knox conceived a high ideal of education, which was not without its influence on subsequent developments.

Beginning with elementary schools, which should be found in every parish, he arranged for secondary schools in every town and cathedral city; and these in turn were to lead up to the universities, which were to be so equipped as to prepare the students for the learned professions and the highest offices in the state. After the rudiments of education were taught, the pupil passed on to the study of grammar and the Latin tongue, and in the higher-class schools or colleges to logic, rhetoric, Latin, and Greek. These higher-grade schools, as they might be called, prepared the pupil for the university, where his education would be completed. The wealthier parents were to pay the expenses of the education of their sons, and funds in the shape of bursaries and scholarships were to provide for the education of poorer children. No parent could dispose of his children as he liked. Education was to be compulsory. "All must be compelled to bring up their children in learning and virtue." The schools were to be inspected every quarter by competent examiners, and the sharper boys were to be selected and made to continue their education, so that "the commonwealth may have some comfort of them." Three of our four universities, St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, were then in existence, but their resources were limited. Provision, however, was to be made for their full equipment, and a detailed scheme of study for each college and faculty was drawn up. We have traveled a long way in many things from the days of Knox, but the scheme of education which he conceived for the nation has not yet been fully carried out. The resources which he thought would be at his disposal were denied him, and for that reason the plan broke down; but the very fact of the conception was in itself an inspiration.

The failure of the scheme, as a matter of fact, was due to resistance of the barons, who had appropriated the patrimony of the church to their own use, and it was this patrimony with which Knox had intended to further his scheme. Had his ideas been carried into effect, it has been said, and with some truth, that Scotland would have had a more complete system of education than any country in the world. To what extent Knox's ideal has been realized will appear as our subject develops.

Meanwhile we have already observed that, in most cases, the early schools originated with the church. The later ones, however, were mainly due to voluntary action on the part of the people. In a few cases it is true that they originated in royal foundations and private endowments, but in no case were they due to statutory enactments. The control and management, at first the monopoly of the church, gradually began to pass out of its hands. From the Reformation downward the church became "less and less influential—at least in the principal burghs—in the management and superintendence of the schools, and the burghs were more and more taking the control of them into their own hands." The reason for this is not far to seek, for, although the burgh authorities were under no legal obligation to erect the school buildings and keep them in repair, yet we find that they undertook this duty; and we also find many instances where the master was paid his salary out of the "common good"—i. e., out of the corporate property of the burgh. The patronage, therefore, gradually became vested in the town councils. But the church continued to lay claim to a superintendence over them, and the

teachers were liable to the trial, judgment, and censure of the church established for the time, as to their sufficiency, qualifications, and deportment in their office. It is difficult, if not impossible, to draw the line exactly, and to settle where the authority of the town council ceased or that of the church began, or how far they were concurrent with one another. But that the church had by law a superintendence over the schools in burghs does not now at least admit of controversy.

This authority was partly inherited, as we have already shown, and partly guaranteed by successive acts of Parliament. It continued until as late as 1861, when, by the Burgh and Parochial Schools Act of that year, burgh schools were relieved of the superintendence of the church, and the long connection between the church and the burgh schools was finally severed.

In regulating the public schools, the town council

laid down the minutest laws in regard to the discipline, the studies, the fees, the holidays, the time-table for weekdays and Sundays, the relation of the masters to each other, and, in a word, everything internal and external that

could possibly fall under their cognizance. The regulations in the main were characterized by shrewdness and sagacity, but some of them must have been very irksome to both scholars and teachers. They involved also an amount of work and personal superintendence that must have harassed and exhausted the body and mind of the most laborious pedagogue.

The subjects of instruction, at first almost entirely classical, remained so in many schools until the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, the Grammar Schools of Glasgow and Montrose were exclusively classical well on into the nineteenth century. In the Stirling Grammar School Latin and Greek alone were taught until 1853. But it appears that a distinction in respect of curricula may be drawn between the schools in large burghs and those in small. The latter appear to have taught such branches of education as English, writing, and arithmetic from quite an early date. On the other hand, the Grammar School of Aberdeen, already referred to, seems to have been exceptional in the extent of its curriculum. About the middle of the eighteenth century, however,

there arose a cry for a more liberal and more practical course of education than that supplied by the old burgh schools, where the neglect or the omission of the commercial branches was felt to be a great evil—an evil which the burgesses and others interested in education endeavored to remove by introducing science classes into the schools.

But this was not sufficient, and to supply what was felt to be a want there came into existence another class of schools called “academies.” At first, in some of these newer schools, science alone was taught,

but in a short time they lost their original characteristics; became in fact grammar schools, with this difference, that they had a more practical course of studies, more commodious buildings, better staff of teachers, better organization, and generally a new body of patrons. Though at first the academies were intended merely to supplement the grammar schools, in a short time they superseded or absorbed them; and in a few instances, instead of amalgamating with them, became their rivals. The oldest academy in Scotland is that of Perth, which was projected in 1760.

Gradually the curricula of the schools became enlarged. About 1850 the subjects of instruction, in general, included Latin, Greek, English, French, mathematics, arithmetic, writing, and,

in some cases, German and bookkeeping. It should be remarked, however, that a curriculum, as we now understand the term, was then practically unknown; pupils simply made a selection of one or more subjects according to their individual inclinations.

With respect to the staff, the chief master or rector as a rule continued to teach classics, his emoluments depending largely upon the fees. But classics were beginning to decline, and the rector's salary correspondingly fell; indeed, it was not uncommon at this time to find the English master with an income much greater than the rector's. The majority of the teachers had some measure of preparation for their work from attendance either at the university or at the normal school, but comparatively few had attained to a degree. As for the pupils, it is estimated that in 1868 about one-half of those attending burgh or grammar schools were under twelve years of age. That their work was pretty arduous may be judged from the fact that they were computed to work about twice as many hours in each year as the boys in the three principal English schools, Eton, Harrow, and Rugby.

PARISH SCHOOLS (1616-1872)

As distinct from those already described, the parish schools are due to legal enactments. As Sir Henry Craik says: "They represented a national and statutory system which had existed for centuries before such a thing had been thought of in England." We have already mentioned the scheme of John Knox and that unfortunately it never became law. The result was that very little was done in the direction of extending education until 1616, when an "act of council was passed empowering the bishops, in conjunction with the heritors and most part of the parishioners, to plant a school in every parish." This was ratified by an act of 1633, giving "power to the bishops to assess the possessor of every 'plow or husband land' according to its worth for the maintenance and establishing of such schools." During the civil war in 1646 it was ordained that a school should be founded in every parish by advice of the presbyteries. Although this act was rescinded at the Restoration, it was practi-

cally re-enacted in 1696, when it was decreed "that there be a school settled and established and a schoolmaster appointed in every parish not already provided, by advice of the heritors and the minister of the parish." By this act parish schools were firmly established throughout the country, and it was this type of school

that brought together all classes, and accustomed the children of the laird to receive their earliest instruction on the same benches with the tenant's son. It was not confined to the bare elements of education, for poverty did not prevent the teacher from being often a man of culture and of scholarship, and finding his solace and ambition in training the aspirant to the university and professional life.

The function of these parochial schools in the Scottish national system of education should be clearly understood. Many parishes and districts were without secondary or higher schools, and the only manner in which a deserving pupil in such localities could make his way to the university was by means of the parish school. Consequently, if the ancient theory of Scottish national education, in regard to the connection between the parochial school and the university, were to be preserved, it was essential that the parochial schoolmaster should be qualified to teach what were known as university subjects. That he was well qualified in a large number of cases is unquestioned, for we know that in 1870 upward of one-half of the students in the universities came directly from the parish or other elementary schools. The Commissioners on Burgh Schools in their report (1868) made this very clear.

The connection between the parochial and burgh schools and the university is therefore an essential element in our scheme of national education. The only way in which this essential element can be preserved is by insisting that the teachers in every burgh or secondary school, and many of the parochial schools, should be capable of instructing their pupils, not only in the subjects common to all primary schools, but in the elements of Latin, mathematics and Greek. To be satisfied with any standard of competency inferior to this would be to lower the character of education which has hitherto prevailed in this country; to deprive meritorious poverty of the means of gratifying a legitimate ambition; and to destroy the link which has hitherto united our schools with our universities, and which, according to universal consent, has proved of the utmost value to the people of this

country. . . . It has been shown that there are districts in Scotland where there is no burgh school, and where the parochial teacher must discharge the duties of a burgh schoolmaster. In such cases we think that special grants should be made by the Treasury, and encouragement given to the higher branches.

It is evident, therefore, that parish schools before the passing of the Education Act (1872) fulfilled a by no means unimportant function in the dissemination of higher education, and it is necessary to have some knowledge of this function in order to understand rightly subsequent legislation.

At the time of the passing of the Education Act, therefore, the schools in Scotland which might be said to be supplying, in a greater or lesser degree, secondary education, can be grouped into four classes: (1) burgh schools; (2) academies or institutions, both in burghs and out of burghs; (3) private schools; and (4) parochial schools. The leading characteristic of the burgh school was its control and management by the burgh, and as examples of such we may cite the High Schools of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The second group, commonly founded by subscription, was managed by directors selected from the subscribers, and the Edinburgh Academy is a typical example of this group; occasionally, however, the academies were amalgamated with the burgh schools, as was the case with Montrose Academy. The private schools were of various kinds, day- or boarding-schools, or a mixture of both; Merchiston is a good example of a boarding-school. The parochial schools, in the main elementary, were managed by the heritors and the parish minister.

THE EDUCATION ACT (SCOTLAND), 1872

The Education Act (1872) introduced school boards into every parish and every royal or parliamentary burgh in Scotland, and created the Scotch Education Department—i. e., the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in Scotland. All parish and burgh schools, whether called academies, high schools, or grammar schools, were vested in the school board of the parish or burgh in which they existed. Accordingly, the school board superseded the heritor and minister, and the

town council and magistrates, in whom the school management was previously vested.

Burgh schools existing at the passing of the act, in which the education given did not consist chiefly of elementary instruction, but of instruction in Latin, Greek, modern languages, mathematics, natural science, and generally in the higher branches of knowledge, were deemed to be "higher-class public schools," and eleven such schools were scheduled. Similarly a parish school which could not reasonably be considered chiefly an elementary school might, on the resolution of the school board, and subject to the approval of the Scotch Education Department, come under the same category.

Furthermore, it was provided that *any* school managed by a school board might be deemed a higher-class public school, if so resolved by the school board and approved by the Scotch Education Department. All schools, other than higher-class public schools, inasmuch as they were eligible for and received parliamentary grant, were named "state-aided schools."

HIGHER-CLASS PUBLIC SCHOOLS (1872-92)

By the act the funds and revenues of higher-class public schools might consist of (1) contributions payable from the common good of the respective burghs; (2) endowments, general and particular; and (3) fees paid by scholars. With regard to contributions from the "common good"—i. e., the common property of the burgh—the respective town councils were required to pay over to the school board whatever sums they had been accustomed to contribute in the past. The amounts of these sums varied from £50 to £900 and, as may be supposed, bear no consistent ratio to the incomes of the schools at the present day. As extreme instances we may compare Edinburgh High School, which derives about one-ninth of its total income from the common good, with Paisley Grammar School which obtains less than one-hundredth from a similar source. The endowments, as a rule, were only small.

Previous to the passing of the act the fees were fixed by the managers and paid directly to the masters. It was now

enacted, however, that the teachers had the right, subject to the approval of the school board, to fix the fees, and that they were to be paid directly to the treasurer of the school board, who had to keep them separate from the other school funds in his charge; moreover, the full amount had to be divided and distributed among the teachers in the manner determined by the school board. In this way the salaries of the teachers were conserved and provided for.

The only expenses which the school board was empowered to take out of the school fund—or, in other words, the only expenses which were liable to fall on the local rates—were (1) the sum required for interest on and repayment of loans raised for providing or enlarging a school, and (2) the cost of providing an examiner to conduct an annual examination of the school. No provision was made by the Act of 1872 either to maintain the building or to provide efficient instruction and equipment. By the terms of the act the higher branches of knowledge had to be annually examined by examiners appointed and employed for that purpose by the school board. This statutory examination, however, did not immediately supersede the popular examination of former years; for some time the two existed side by side. Ultimately the popular examination took the form of the annual exhibition of work and prize distribution of modern days. There were not wanting those who expressed the opinion that the examiner, in so far as he was appointed and remunerated by the school board, was not sufficiently independent. His report, often effusively complimentary, was not always taken seriously by the parents.

At the same time, although there may have been grounds for criticism, the examinations were productive of good. The examiners were usually university professors of standing, and, as they passed from school to school, their suggestions and criticisms were at least stimulating, and undoubtedly tended to promote a more homogeneous and unified effort in higher schools.

There was no further legislation regarding these schools until 1878, when the Education Act of that year introduced one or two important changes. In the first place, school boards

having the management of such schools were bound to maintain the school buildings out of the school fund, and were also empowered to pay from the same fund such other expenses as were necessary for the promotion of efficient education therein, provided in both cases that the consent of the Scotch Education Department was first obtained; furthermore, powers were given to the Scotch Education Department to make provision for examining a higher-class public school or a higher-class school (i. e., a secondary school under an authority other than a school board), whenever application for such was made by the respective managers. There was a distinction, however, between the two, though of small importance: in the case of the former the expenses connected with the examination were to be paid by the managers; in the case of the latter the expenses fell to be borne by the Department. In due course applications for examination were made, but, principally through lack of funds, the work was not undertaken until several years later.

In 1885 the Scotch Education Department was reorganized, the change involving the appointment of the secretary for Scotland as vice-president of the Scotch Education Department, and the reconstruction of the staff of that department on a separate basis. "This arrangement, while it preserved certain important relations between the administration of the education grants in England and Scotland, offered guarantees that separate and careful attention should be given to the special requirements of Scotland." This special attention to Scottish education very soon manifested itself. Meanwhile there had been passed, in 1882, the Educational Endowments Act, by which the obligation was laid upon the Scotch Education Department of periodically examining endowed schools, the cost of the examination to fall upon the endowment. Thus the inspection of higher-class schools promised to cover a much wider field than at first anticipated. After careful inquiry into the general aims and objects of these schools in each locality, and after consultation with the managers, the Department, in 1886, undertook the examination of higher-class schools of all kinds; in the case of endowed higher-class schools it was compulsory, but in other cases

optional. The results of this first "government" examination are naturally interesting. We find that twenty-two higher-class public schools, ten endowed schools, and six schools under voluntary management were examined. In the report on the examination it was stated that, although signs of failure were numerous, they were due rather to the conditions under which the schools worked than to deficiencies on the part of the teaching staff. But the subjects of study appear to have been almost precisely the same as pursued fifty years previously, and in many cases it was complained that antiquated methods of instruction were being pursued. There was no common standard and a "very wide divergence between the range and achievements of schools nominally of the same class." Considerable doubt and difference of opinion, too, as to the proper aims and organization of a secondary school, seem to have prevailed in the various schools.

This first official examination was partly written and partly oral, and, in the instructions to the examiners in the following year, it was stated that much importance was attached to the individual results in the written examination in the higher classes, and that a report as to their views regarding the expediency of issuing a certificate to individual scholars as a result of the final or "leaving" examination should be made, as well as a statement as to how far such an examination would be capable of application in the schools visited. It should be noted that annual written examinations were at that time conducted by the several universities in suitable centers throughout the country, and that, if a "leaving" certificate examination were to be instituted in connection with the inspection of higher-class schools, possible interference with existing systems might ensue. Accordingly, the Scotch Education Department proceeded with commendable caution. The managers of higher-class schools, the university authorities, and the various professional bodies in the country were first consulted; and various examining authorities, including the universities, having agreed to accept the examination as a substitute for their own, the system

of a "leaving-certificate examination" was initiated in 1888. In order to secure a uniform and high standard, the professors of the Scotch universities were invited to take a share in the supervision of the work. The hope, too, was expressed that the examination, although separate from the inspection, would to a large extent, dispense with the minute *annual* inspection of each of the higher schools, in so far as the written part of this inspection was concerned.

"To avoid imposing regulations which might fetter the freedom and individuality of schools, the examination was not based upon any prescribed books, but was made a test of the general attainments of each pupil in each subject." It was anticipated that in course of time the "leaving-certificate examinations" would tend "to concentrate the work in the secondary schools, where much inconvenience had been caused by the necessity of preparing pupils for various examinations, of much the same standard, but based in each case upon different prescribed books." Examinations were held in six subjects: mathematics (including arithmetic), English (with questions on modern history and geography), Latin, Greek, French, and German, and, as each higher school was a center, the examinations were held simultaneously throughout the country. There were three grades in each subject: honors, first grade (higher), and second grade (lower); and twenty-nine schools, sending in a total of 972 candidates were examined. The number of certificates issued was 2,334 a certificate being issued for a pass in each subject.

It is important to notice that this leaving-certificate examination was initiated in connection with higher-class schools, and, in its inception, had no reference to state-aided schools. In this connection we find in the report of 1888:

It has been represented to us that the examination should not be confined to the pupils of secondary schools, but should be open to all. It must be noticed, however, that the inspection with which the examination is connected is confined to secondary or higher class schools, by act of Parliament, and we have consequently no power to extend it as proposed. Nor are we satisfied that such extension would be in itself expedient. At present no

one is excluded by the examination from any privilege previously enjoyed under existing systems of examination; while there are obvious advantages in the issue of one certificate which will not merely attest the amount of information acquired by the candidates, but also the fact that they have passed through a course of education in a recognized secondary school. We look to this as a strong and deserved encouragement to such schools, of the decadence of which in recent years many complaints have reached us.

[To be continued]